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NATO: Meeting of Foreign Ministers

*NATO Foreign Ministers meet tomorrow and Friday to discuss arms control, force modernization, and East-West relations, but Spain will not sign the final communique.*

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Spanish Prime Minister Gonzalez announced in a press conference in Madrid yesterday that Spain "will abstain with respect" because of its current review of its NATO membership. The announcement was made following the first cabinet meeting of the new Spanish Government.

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Comment: The other Allies, except Greece, will support NATO's decision to proceed with INF modernization unless concrete results are achieved at the Geneva negotiations. Although Denmark's parliament voted yesterday to suspend its INF infrastructure payments, the Danes probably will endorse the decision.

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The Allies will endorse the zero option negotiating position and will pledge again to welcome all constructive Soviet proposals at Geneva. West German Foreign Minister Genscher may urge the Allies to respond to a recent report of the USSR's willingness to discuss the European conventional arms balance.

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The Canadians, Norwegians, Danes, and Greeks have urged moderation in dealing with the new Soviet leadership. Almost all the Allies oppose specific reference to NATO's declaration of last January that Poland has to lift martial law, release political detainees, and engage in dialogues with the Church and Solidarity before normal relations with the West can resume. The French prefer coordinating Western economic policy with the Eastern Bloc in other forums that include West European neutrals and Japan, and Paris wants language dealing with East-West economic relations deleted from the final communique.

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The Allies almost certainly will not ask the US to change the agreed INF negotiating position. At the same time, they will need to show flexibility at Geneva and at the MBFR and CSCE talks to undercut their domestic critics and enlist support for missile deployments scheduled for next year. They probably will react cautiously to a lifting of martial law in Poland but are likely to reassess applicability of the NATO guidelines.

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